

**An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna**  
**Department of Education and Skills**

**Whole School Evaluation**  
**Management, Leadership and Learning**

**REPORT**

<b>Ainm na scoile / School name</b>	St Patrick's B N S
<b>Seoladh na scoile / School address</b>	Gardiner's Hill Cork
<b>Uimhir rolla / Roll number</b>	17045Q

**Date of inspection: 08-11-2018**



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agus Scileanna**  
Department of  
Education and Skills

## **WHAT IS WHOLE-SCHOOL EVALUATION – MANAGEMENT, LEADERSHIP AND LEARNING?**

Whole-School Evaluation – Management, Leadership and Learning reports on the quality of teaching and learning and on the quality of management and leadership in a school. It affirms good practice and makes recommendations, where appropriate, to aid the further development of educational provision in the school.

## **HOW TO READ THIS REPORT**

During this inspection, the inspectors evaluated and reported under the following headings or areas of enquiry:

1. The quality of pupils' learning
2. The quality of teaching
3. The quality of support for pupils' well-being
4. The quality of leadership and management
5. The quality of school self-evaluation

Inspectors describe the quality of each of these areas using the Inspectorate's quality continuum, which is shown on the final page of this report. The quality continuum provides examples of the language used by inspectors when evaluating and describing the quality of the school's provision in each area.

The board of management of the school was given an opportunity to comment in writing on the findings and recommendations of the report, and the response of the board will be found in the appendix of this report.

## **CHILD PROTECTION**

During the inspection visit, the following checks in relation to the school's child protection procedures were conducted:

1. The name of the DLP and the Child Safeguarding Statement are prominently displayed near the main entrance to the school.
2. The Child Safeguarding Statement has been ratified by the board and includes an annual review and a risk assessment.
3. All teachers visited reported that they have read the Child Safeguarding Statement and that they are aware of their responsibilities as mandated persons.
4. The Child Safeguarding Statement meets the requirements of the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2017.
5. The records of the last three board of management meetings record a child protection oversight report that meet the requirements of the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary schools 2017.
6. The board of management has ensured that arrangements are in place to provide information to all school personnel on the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools, 2017
7. School planning documentation indicates that the school is making full provision for the relevant aspects of the curriculum (SPHE, Stay Safe, RSE, Wellbeing).
8. Child protection records are maintained in a secure location.

The school did not meet the requirements in relation to No. 5 above and therefore was not fully compliant with the checks undertaken. However, the school has subsequently furnished evidence of compliance with these requirements.

## Whole-School Evaluation – Management, Leadership and Learning

<b>Dates of inspection</b>	08-11-2018
<b>Inspection activities undertaken</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meetings with principal and in-school leadership team</li> <li>• Meeting with representatives of the board of management</li> <li>• Meeting with parent representatives</li> <li>• Meeting with teachers</li> <li>• Review of relevant documents</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Analysis of parent, pupil and teacher questionnaires</li> <li>• Observation of teaching and learning</li> <li>• Examination of pupils’ work</li> <li>• Interaction with pupils</li> <li>• Feedback to principal, deputy principal and teachers, and to parent and board of management representatives</li> </ul>

### SCHOOL CONTEXT

St Patrick’s national school is located in Cork city and caters for boys from first to sixth class. The school is under the patronage of the Catholic Bishop of Cork and Ross. At the time of the evaluation, there were 212 pupils enrolled. The school participates in the *Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools* (DEIS) initiative and the School Completion Programme (SCP). Staff consists of an administrative principal, eleven mainstream class teachers, ten full-time special education teachers and one shared home-school-community liaison (HSCL) co-ordinator.

### SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

#### FINDINGS

- The overall quality of pupils’ learning is good with some very good outcomes achieved; pupils’ behaviour, politeness and engagement in learning is highly commended.
- The overall quality of teaching is good with some very good practice observed; there is potential to develop aspects of language teaching and special educational needs (SEN) provision.
- While the quality of assessment is good, pupils in some instances are unsure of their own proficiency relating to their learning and progress.
- The quality of support for pupils’ wellbeing is very good.
- The overall quality of management is satisfactory with scope to improve board of management governance procedures and further develop leadership in learning, particularly in special educational provision.
- The school has engaged positively with the school self-evaluation (SSE) process.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

- The range of English and Irish reading genres with which pupils engage should be extended to facilitate the transfer of reading skills to a wide variety of texts and to further cultivate positive attitudes towards reading.
- A review of current planning and organisation of support for pupils with additional learning needs should be undertaken to ensure that provision is in line with the *Continuum of Support* and that selected interventions and learning targets are collaboratively planned.

- A whole-school review of assessment practices should be initiated with a particular focus on developing assessment for learning strategies that empower pupils to see themselves as active agents in their learning.
- Aspects of the board of management's oversight role in governing the school require development specifically in relation to the maintenance of minutes of meetings, compliance with anti-bullying and child protection procedures and review of duties assigned to in-school leadership roles.

## **DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **1. THE QUALITY OF PUPILS' LEARNING**

- The overall quality of learning is good across the curriculum areas evaluated with some very good outcomes achieved. High levels of engagement were noted in the lessons observed and pupils demonstrate positive dispositions to learning. Pupils are provided with regular opportunities to work independently and collaboratively in a purposeful manner. Project work is a commendable feature of pupil learning in Social, Environmental and Scientific lessons and work completed by pupils in the Visual Arts reflects the high standards achieved.
- Language skills are well-developed throughout the school. Pupils demonstrate a good ability to initiate and engage in conversation about their own learning. Tá béim an-mhaith ar Ghaeilge neamhfhoirmiúil tríd an scoil. Tá raon leathan d'fhoclóir ag na daltaí agus labhraíonn siad le dea-fhoghraíocht. *There is a very good emphasis on informal spoken Irish throughout the school. Pupils have a wide vocabulary and pronunciation is good.*
- Most pupils read with fluency in English and Irish and there is generally a good standard of reading throughout the school. The school has placed a focus on literacy and the development of pupils' reading skills through a range of support initiatives. Good use is made of the novel and there is a satisfactory range of reading materials available. However, a wider variety of reading texts should be made available to pupils to further enhance learning experiences and outcomes.
- Good emphasis was noted in functional writing across the school with some scope to extend creative writing in a number of classrooms. The strong emphasis on the presentation and organisation of written work is commended.
- Learning in Mathematics is of a high quality. Pupils can recall number facts easily, use mathematical language appropriately, problem-solve and connect their learning to real-life situations. Mathematics is well integrated with other curriculum areas.

### **2. THE QUALITY OF TEACHING**

- The overall quality of teaching is good with some very good practice observed. Teachers create orderly, inclusive learning environments based on mutual respect and affirmation. They encourage pupils to relate their learning to prior knowledge and employ a good range of methodologies with a particular emphasis on active learning. Pupil voice is encouraged and nurtured.
- All teachers prepare long and short-term planning and complete monthly progress reports. The quality of learning environments varied throughout the school and there exists scope in some settings to develop visual displays as a means of scaffolding pupil learning and celebrating their work.
- The quality of teaching in settings for pupils with additional needs is generally good. The school has a significant staffing allocation, expertise and resources to provide for identified pupils. Care

should be taken, however, to ensure that the Continuum of Support informs the selection process, that priority is given to those pupils with greatest need and that the most appropriate interventions are selected. Current interventions include in-class support, station teaching and the withdrawal of individuals and groups for support. Where in-class support is provided, greater collaborative planning practices are recommended. The school is currently redrafting its SEN policy in accordance with DES Circular 14/17.

- Pupils' learning is progressed through the preparation of detailed support plans. In some instances, the inclusion of more specific learner-centred targets is recommended together with further development of a means of regularly recording individual pupil progress. The current provision for pupils with English as an additional language would benefit from an assessment of current language levels in addition to a more structured approach to planning.
- The overall quality of assessment is good. A range of strategies is used to monitor pupils' learning. Standardised tests, teacher-designed tests and tasks and monitoring of pupils' written work are features of current practice. A whole-school review of assessment is advised in order to establish how assessment data can be used more meaningfully to support and challenge pupils. In some instances, some pupils are unsure of their own proficiency relating to their learning and progress. The school is advised to develop self and peer-assessment practices in order to deepen pupils' reflection on their own learning.

### **3. THE QUALITY OF SUPPORT FOR PUPILS' WELLBEING**

- The quality of support for pupils' wellbeing is very good. This is a key strength of the school. Pupils, in their questionnaire responses, state that they feel well cared for, safe and supported. The school has high expectations of the pupils and their behaviour, politeness and engagement in learning is highly commended. Teachers are committed to providing pupils with a wide range of additional learning opportunities including co-curricular and extra-curricular activities. The school has successfully been awarded the Amber Flag and participates in the Green Schools programme. A range of other activities to promote pupil wellbeing are provided including Friends for Life and Zippy's Friends. The students' council plays an important role in promoting pupil leadership skills and pupil voice.
- Parents receive valuable support from the recently-appointed home-school-community liaison (HSCL) co-ordinator who fosters positive relationships with the school and wider community. There are very good systems of home-school communication in place including the use of the school website, the school magazine and, more recently, a social media platform. The parents' association is very active and is deeply committed to supporting the school in a variety of creative ways. Almost all parents indicated, through parental questionnaires, that they considered the school to be welcoming and supportive. The school should consider a formal mechanism for capturing the parental perspective in future policy formulation.
- The school regularly provides placements for student teachers. Such engagement in initial teacher education programmes is welcome and is included among the standards of the Teaching Council's Code of Professional Conduct for Teachers as it can provide valuable professional benefits for teachers, student teachers, pupils and the teacher education institution.

### **4. THE QUALITY OF LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

- The overall quality of leadership and management is satisfactory.
- The board of management is properly constituted and fulfils its duties as required. It has ensured that the school buildings and grounds are well-maintained. Financial accounts are certified annually. The board is advised to adopt best practice procedures as outlined in the Department

of Education and Skills' *Governance Manual for Primary Schools 2015–2019*. The board should ensure that, in compliance with Circular 0081/2017, a Child Protection oversight report is provided at each meeting and recorded in the minutes. Similarly, in accordance with Circular 0045/2013, the principal should provide a report regarding anti-bullying procedures to the board once a term. Minutes of board meetings should record; the names of those in attendance; decisions made; a principal's report and the information to be conveyed to the school community. The board of management should update and ratify its enrolment policy to reflect the inclusive nature of the school. Duties assigned to leadership roles should be regularly reviewed to reflect school priorities.

- The principal demonstrates a clear understanding of the educational needs of the school community and nurtures positive relationships with the pupils. The deputy principal works diligently in fulfilling his role. Members of the in-school management team attend to a broad range of duties with due care and attention. There is scope, under the direction of the principal and the in-school leadership team, to further develop leadership in learning, particularly in special educational provision.

#### **5. THE QUALITY OF SCHOOL SELF-EVALUATION**

- The quality of school self-evaluation (SSE), incorporating planning for DEIS, is good. The school has prioritised key areas for development in aspects of literacy and numeracy. It has analysed pupil outcomes to create informed targets at individual classroom level. There is evidence of the impact of this work in classroom practice.
- The school plan is of a good quality with some curriculum plans giving very good direction to teachers. The school's capacity to implement the recommendations of this report is good.

## THE INSPECTORATE'S QUALITY CONTINUUM

Inspectors describe the quality of provision in the school using the Inspectorate's quality continuum, which is shown below. The quality continuum provides examples of the language used by inspectors when evaluating and describing the of quality the school's provision of each area.

Level	Description	Example of descriptive terms
<b>Very Good</b>	<b>Very good</b> applies where the quality of the areas evaluated is of a very high standard. The very few areas for improvement that exist do not significantly impact on the overall quality of provision. For some schools in this category the quality of what is evaluated is <b>outstanding</b> and provides an example for other schools of exceptionally high standards of provision.	Very good; of a very high quality; very effective practice; highly commendable; very successful; few areas for improvement; notable; of a very high standard. Excellent; outstanding; exceptionally high standard, with very significant strengths; exemplary
<b>Good</b>	<b>Good</b> applies where the strengths in the areas evaluated clearly outweigh the areas in need of improvement. The areas requiring improvement impact on the quality of pupils' learning. The school needs to build on its strengths and take action to address the areas identified as requiring improvement in order to achieve a <b>very good</b> standard.	Good; good quality; valuable; effective practice; competent; useful; commendable; good standard; some areas for improvement
<b>Satisfactory</b>	<b>Satisfactory</b> applies where the quality of provision is adequate. The strengths in what is being evaluated just outweigh the shortcomings. While the shortcomings do not have a significant negative impact they constrain the quality of the learning experiences and should be addressed in order to achieve a better standard.	Satisfactory; adequate; appropriate provision although some possibilities for improvement exist; acceptable level of quality; improvement needed in some areas
<b>Fair</b>	<b>Fair</b> applies where, although there are some strengths in the areas evaluated, deficiencies or shortcomings that outweigh those strengths also exist. The school will have to address certain deficiencies without delay in order to ensure that provision is satisfactory or better.	Fair; evident weaknesses that are impacting on pupils' learning; less than satisfactory; experiencing difficulty; must improve in specified areas; action required to improve
<b>Weak</b>	<b>Weak</b> applies where there are serious deficiencies in the areas evaluated. Immediate and coordinated whole-school action is required to address the areas of concern. In some cases, the intervention of other agencies may be required to support improvements.	Weak; unsatisfactory; insufficient; ineffective; poor; requiring significant change, development or improvement; experiencing significant difficulties;

# **Appendix**

**SCHOOL RESPONSE TO THE REPORT**

**Submitted by the Board of Management**



## **Part A Observations on the content of the inspection report**

The Board accepts the report as the final inspection report available for publication and wished to respond formally to the report. The report highlights the good/very good quality of teaching and learning in the school and affirms that the support for pupils' wellbeing is very good. The positive comments on the standard of Mathematics, language skills and oral Irish in the school are favourably received.

## **Part B Follow-up actions planned or undertaken since the completion of the inspection activity to implement the findings and recommendations of the inspection.**

- The Inspectorate has acknowledged that language skills are well developed through the school. However, in line with the recommendation, the school is now investing heavily in purchasing readers of different genres to further cultivate positive attitudes towards reading.
- The Inspectorate has commented on the good teaching for pupils with additional needs and that the school has the expertise and resources to provide for identified pupils. The school's quality of support for pupils' wellbeing is described as very good. In accordance with the recommendation, the school is reviewing and will continue to review its current planning and organisation of support for pupils with additional learning needs. The coordinator of special needs will lead such reviews.
- The Inspectorate has stated that quality of assessment in the school is good. In keeping with the recommendation, the school will incorporate more assessment for learning practices, peer assessment and seek to empower pupils to reflect on the products and outcomes of their own learning.
- The Inspectorate has observed that members of the in-school management team attend to a broad range of duties with due care and attention. Such duties are currently under review to ensure that there are clear foci for each school year and collaboration amongst post holders in achieving targets.
- The Inspectorate has found that the Board of Management fulfils its duties as required and that the school buildings and grounds are well-maintained. In accordance with the recommendation, future board meetings will contain a more comprehensive set of minutes reflecting the Inspectorate's suggestions. The school's enrolment policy will also be amended to reflect the inclusive nature of the school.